

KY Tech Instructor and OVR Counselor Make a Difference in the Life of JD Patton Electrical Technology Student

Overcoming the odds is always a great feeling of accomplishment and JD Patton ATC Electricity Student Josh Henry has reason to feel good about his education and skills training under the watchful eye of Electrical Technology Instructor Tom Pitts.

In the summer of 2005, Henry notified his high school counselor that he wanted to participate in the welding program at the area technology center. However, Josh Henry has Spinal Bifida and there were concerns over his safety and welfare. So, JD Patton Principal Ray Stanley looked for an alternative solution and approached Pitts about the possibility of Josh enrolling in his class. As luck would have it, the faculty and staff at the ATC were having a summer career camp, and specifically invited Josh to attend. According to Pitts, Josh “seemed to do fine in my class and enrolled for the fall semester.”

Pitts realized this young man had a lot to overcome. During the first year in his class, he observed that Josh struggled at times with his eyesight. However, this did not deter the instructor or the student. Through another Department for Workforce Investment agency, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Josh received some special services and equipment from his Counselor Victoria Reilly.

“To be honest, I wouldn’t be able to do half the stuff I’m able to do if it had not been for the help of Mr. Pitts and the services I received from Vocational Rehabilitation,” says Henry. “Mrs. Reilly has really helped me progress by making it possible to get special equipment so that I can see better.”

Through OVR, Josh received a hand-held paperweight magnifier that he describes as a “bubble glass.” This device allows him to see words in a larger font because it magnifies words when the paperweight is put on a piece of paper. Additionally, he has received a small and compact scope that allows him to view something written on the board. “It kinda looks like a rifle scope. You twist it at the end and it magnifies what is on the board,” says Josh. “So, this helps me see everything on the board better.”

The “Reading and Write Gold Program” has helped him tremendously in being able to understand written documentation. “Whatever you want to read, you take a copy and put it through a scanner. From the scanner, the document goes to the program,” says Josh. Then, you can touch an icon and the program basically reads the document to you. While the computer is reading the document, it also highlights the word as it is being read. It does a lot of other things too. I really like this piece of equipment because it helps me when I’m taking tests or certification tests.”

At the end of the first school year, Josh approached Mr. Pitts about getting a summer job. Well, this further impressed his instructor, and because of Josh’s perseverance and the work ethic displayed in Pitts’ classroom, he decided to call a small company that he has worked with over the years.



Josh is shown working at WIC, where he co-ops five days a week for four hours a day.

“I have a co-op relationship with a company called Wiring for Industrial Controls (WIC) and contacted Malia Johnson, the manager to see if there were any openings. Ms. Johnson interviewed Josh; however, there was nothing available at the time,” says Pitts. “Shortly after school started, I received a call from Malia who wanted Josh to co-op with WIC. So, I contacted Victoria Reilly at OVR and the match was made.”

“I am working at WIC today because of the skills that I have learned in Mr. Pitts’ class. He has taught me so many skills and I have been able to use what I learned to help me understand the job I am in,” says Josh. “I love my job because it’s something that is needed and I am also needed because of the skills that I can bring to this job. I work five days a week for four hours a day.”

Many people walk or roll, as the case may be, through the doors of an area technology center and learn skills that provide an opportunity for them to succeed in life. In Josh’s case, Mr. Pitts took a special interest in him because of his attitude in trying to learn a skill to become someone.



“There is a high demand for people who are technically trained in many career areas and I think the programs here would help all students. Not only did I get to learn some technical skills, but there were teachers that helped me with English and math. They helped me understand the academic theory in my technical program. They also helped me with my portfolios,” says Josh. “To be honest with you, I wouldn’t be able to do what I do without Mr. Pitts. He took the time to sit down and explain my lessons to me step by step. It was a tremendous help. He also taught a lot of theory – but showed us through a hands-on approach. I learned much better this way. It’s because of him that I now have a job and a future.”

“Victoria Reilly and OVR have been a major part of Josh’s success and I am proud of them both. I know Josh will become successful, even with his limitations, because his heart has no limitations. He has tried hard to do everything that has been asked of him; regardless of his physical restrictions,” says Pitts. “I became very proud of him because he has real heart. Making a difference in the life of a student is what makes teaching so worthwhile, especially when one has had to overcome so many obstacles.”

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By: Fran Dundon



Josh Henry is 18 years of age and will graduate at the end of this school year. His future plans include going to either Cincinnati State or Northern KY Technical College. He is thinking about becoming an “electrical estimator, OSHA safety inspector or even an electronics repair person.”